

Wiley Hausam, Director  
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts

**PEAK** Performances presents



Photo Courtesy of the Artist

# Laura Benanti

**Todd Almond**, accompanist

**Sat. November 16, 2024, 8:00 pm**

**Alexander Kasser Theater**

**Running Time:** Approximately 75–85 minutes, no intermission.



# About the Artists

**Laura Benanti**, a Tony Award® winner and five-time Tony Award® nominee, is a highly celebrated stage and screen actress. Benanti co-starred in the hit film *No Hard Feelings* with Jennifer Lawrence and Matthew Broderick and guest stars in Max's *Gilded Age*, Hulu's *Life & Beth* (created by and starring Amy Schumer), and *Elsbeth* on CBS. Benanti earned rave reviews for her portrayal of a grieving widow in Netflix's film *Worth*, starring Michael Keaton, Stanley Tucci, and Amy Ryan. She will be seen later this year in the film *Goodrich* opposite Michael Keaton and *Everything's Going to Be Great* with Bryan Cranston and Allison Janney. Benanti's iconic impression of Melania Trump on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* is widely praised. Other TV work includes *Younger*, *Ziwe*, *Gossip Girl*, *Supergirl*, *Nashville*, and *Inside Amy Schumer* (among many others). In the theater, Benanti took Broadway by storm at the age of 18 as Maria in *The Sound of Music* and has subsequently starred in ten more Broadway shows (musicals, straight plays, comedies, and dramas) including *Into the Woods*, *Nine* (opposite Antonio Banderas), *Gypsy* (for which she won a Tony Award®), *She Loves Me*, *My Fair Lady*, and Steve Martin's *Meteor Shower* opposite Amy Schumer and Keegan-Michael Key. This year, Benanti debuted her highly celebrated solo comedy show *Laura Benanti: Nobody Cares*, which she created, wrote, and starred in. This *New York Times* critic pick is available for streaming on Audible.

**Todd Almond** (accompanist) is a performer, songwriter, and playwright whose work spans both stage and screen. His latest musical, *I'm Almost There*, directed by Tony Award® winner David Cromer, made its world premiere at the 2024 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, produced by Audible Theater and Francesca Moody Productions. Almond was recently seen on Broadway in the acclaimed *Girl from the North Country*, the Conor McPherson/Bob Dylan musical that debuted at the Public Theater before transferring to the Belasco Theatre. His forthcoming memoir, *Slow Train Coming*—which chronicles the journey of *Girl from the North Country* and his personal reflections—will be published by Bloomsbury/Methuen in January 2025. Almond also co-wrote songs and was music director for Laura Benanti's one-woman show *Nobody Cares*. He is the co-founder with Lear deBessonet of Public Works at the Public Theater, where he composed, co-wrote, and co-starred in musical adaptations of *The Tempest*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Winter's Tale*, all staged at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park. Additionally, his musical *Kansas City Choir Boy*, in which he co-starred with Courtney Love, played in New York and toured the US; and his musical *Girlfriend* (based on Matthew Sweet's album) has enjoyed productions across the US and Japan. A frequent collaborator with luminaries such as Sarah Ruhl, Suzan-Lori Parks, Jenny Schwartz, and Sherie Rene Scott, Almond has also performed alongside Kelli O'Hara and Andrew Rannells. On screen, he has appeared in *Law & Order: SVU* and the HBO Max reboot of *Gossip Girl*. Almond is a graduate of CCM. <http://www.toddalmond.com/>.

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We respectfully acknowledge that Montclair State University occupies land in Lenapehoking, the traditional and expropriated territory of the Lenape. As a state institution, we recognize and support the sovereignty of New Jersey's three state-recognized tribes: the Ramapough Lenape, Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, and Powhatan Renape nations. We recognize the sovereign nations of the Lenape diaspora elsewhere in North America, as well as other Indigenous individuals and communities now residing in New Jersey. By offering this land acknowledgement, we commit to addressing the historical legacies of Indigenous dispossession and dismantling practices of erasure that persist today. We recognize the resilience and persistence of contemporary Indigenous communities and their role in educating all of us about justice, equity, and the stewardship of the land throughout the generations.



Programs in this season were made possible, in part, by the Alexander Kasser Theater Endowment Fund, PEAK Patrons, and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

PEAK Performances develops, presents, and produces a broad range of world-class dance, film, master classes, music, opera and music theater, talks, and theater in the Alexander Kasser Theater on the campus of Montclair State University for students, faculty, staff, and the general public. We are building community through live performance. PEAK Performances is a program of the university's Arts + Cultural Programming Department



COMING IN FEBRUARY!

# QUEEN OF THE MIST

MUSICAL - IN - CONCERT

Words & Music by **Michael John LaChiusa**

Directed by **Kirsten Sanderson**

THU. & FRI., FEBRUARY 20-21 @ 7:30 PM | SAT., FEBRUARY 22 @ 8:00 PM  
SUN., FEBRUARY 23 @ 3:00 PM

**ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER**

QUEEN OF THE MIST is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals. [concordtheatricals.com](http://concordtheatricals.com)



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MANUAL CINEMA  
**FRANKENSTEIN**  
MULTIMEDIA PUPPETRY, LIVE MUSIC, FILM, THEATER  
SAT., MAY 3 @ 8:00 PM  
**ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER**

MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO  
**NO MORE WATER:  
THE GOSPEL OF JAMES BALDWIN**  
MUSIC  
THU., MAY 8 AT 7:00 PM  
**ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER**

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